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*The story of the great war.* By Roland G. Usher, Ph.D. (New York: Macmillan company, 1919. 350 p. \$2.50)

The need for a brief account of the great war and the international rivalries that preceded it and brought it on is a very real one; and the announcement that Mr. Usher was preparing such an account naturally aroused an immediate interest. The reviewer regrets to say, however, that he finds the published volume to be somewhat disappointing. The work contains a number of good, readable chapters, a few suggestive and helpful illustrations, and several useful maps; but it also contains a great deal that the reviewer had hoped would not be included in a work of this sort. It was to be expected that what was written under the stress of war should partake largely of the character of propaganda, but the war is now a matter of history and we have a right to expect that historical students will try to assume a more judicial attitude toward the events of the past few years. The chief objection to Mr. Usher's work is that its viewpoint is that of 1917; it is another effort to show that Germany was fatally wrong and the allies right on all points throughout the course of the war. Mr. Usher is doubtless right in attributing the heavier guilt to the German imperialists, but certain documents recently published (to which the author may not have had access) seem to show that the Austrian government was involved more deeply than we believed during the war. The reviewer also doubts the advisability of publishing the "Hymn of hate" in a small volume like this, or of including illustrations that were originally intended to produce hatred, an emotion that is not of the nobler sort and should not be cherished too long. Nor does it seem wholly proper to give valuable space to such tales as the stories of the appearance of Joan of Arc, or the ghostly warriors of Agincourt, or the redoubtable St. George on his white horse. These tales may be properly discussed by the folklorist or the psychologist, but they scarcely belong in the field of history.

L. M. L.

*Theodore Roosevelt.* An intimate biography. By William Roscoe Thayer. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin company, 1919. 474 p. \$5.00)

*The life of Theodore Roosevelt.* By William Draper Lewis, Ph.D. (Philadelphia and Chicago: John C. Winston company, 1919. 480 p. \$2.25)

*Theodore Roosevelt's letters to his children.* Edited by Joseph Bucklin Bishop. (New York: Charles Scribner's sons, 1919. 240 p. \$3.00 net)

The volumes under review serve to emphasize the thought expressed

by Lawrence F. Abbott in his *Impressions of Roosevelt*, that Theodore Roosevelt's greatest contribution to his country and his time was personality, was Theodore Roosevelt himself.

It was anticipated that Mr. Thayer because of his friendship with Colonel Roosevelt, extending over a period of forty years, would present in his volume such an analysis as could nowhere else be found. In fact a reading of the introduction warrants this supposition. "A friend's outlined portrait" (p. xi) is promised, for as Mr. Thayer asserts, "we have fallen too much into the habit of imagining that only hostile critics tell the truth." This personal friendship of so many years is the more remarkable when it is learned that the author never followed the political leadership of Colonel Roosevelt. Mr. Thayer was a mugwump in 1884 and voted for Wilson in 1912. Roosevelt's attitude towards the mugwump movement was defined in one of his letters to Sir George Otto Trevelyan as follows: "But I suppose Lecky was thinking of the creatures analogous to our mugwumps, the people who actually pride themselves on a fantastic and visionary morality" (*Scribner's magazine*, October, 1919, p. 392.)

After the outbreak of the world war, the two men were at one in their sympathy with the cause of the allies, in their efforts to force the United States to take up the cause, and in their antagonism to the Wilson administration. In view of these intimate relationships, the reader, while acknowledging his indebtedness to Mr. Thayer for this presentation of Roosevelt's life and character, feels a sense of disappointment that a more comprehensive study was not made. Was there not some promise that Mr. Thayer would honor his friend by producing a biography such as that by Joseph Bucklin Bishop promises to be?

The query constantly arises, has the author not sacrificed space as well as the sense of fairness through his frequent use of epithets and slurs, for there can be no doubt that he is one who "loathes the administration of President Wilson" (p. 385). There follow in quick succession such expressions as, "the first of his many variegated messages" (p. 402); "sanctimonious tribute to the superiority in virtue of the United States to all other nations" (p. 403); "policy of contradictions and brief paroxysms of boldness" (p. 404); "policy of timidity and evasion" (p. 430). It is questionable also whether the facts justify such a characterization of James G. Blaine as that on page 48; or the assertion that Andrew Jackson was "a good old political freebooter" (p. 86). The phrase "to the victors belong the spoils," should not be attributed to Jackson. Other inaccuracies occur. Cleveland became president in 1893; Joseph G. Cannon began his congressional career in 1873, instead of 1863 (p. 343); "he took no active part in politics" (p. 347), does not tally with

the fact that Roosevelt was a leader in the New York republican convention and supported actively his candidate, Henry L. Stimson, for governor. Two or three more notes were not interchanged after the "once-a-week-to-Falmouth order" (p. 430) for diplomatic relations between Germany and the United States were severed by President Wilson three days after the receipt of that order on February 3.

Both these biographies of Colonel Roosevelt give the outstanding facts in his career. Emphasis has been naturally given to his courage, his sympathy with real men, his versatility, and his extraordinary personality. In fact, Roosevelt has himself, in a letter to Trevelyan of March 9, 1905, really defined the goal which he sought. "Life," he writes, "is a long campaign where every victory merely leaves the ground free for another battle, and sooner or later defeat comes to every man unless death forestalls it. But the final defeat does not and should not cancel the triumphs, if the latter have been substantial and for a cause worth championing" (*Scribner's magazine*, October, 1919, p. 390).

The volume by Mr. Lewis follows more closely even than does that by Mr. Thayer the narrative of events to be found in Roosevelt's autobiography. His approach is expressed at the outset as follows: "Since Caesar, perhaps no one has attained among crowding duties and great responsibilities such high proficiency in so many separate fields of human activity" (p. 17). While it was the hope of Mr. Lewis in writing the volume "to end forever any misconceptions of the man and his purposes that may yet remain," he has given little attention to the controversy of 1912.

"Roosevelt the naturalist," chapter xxv, was written by Mr. Stone, curator of the Philadelphia academy of natural sciences, and chapter xxxviii, "Books and speeches," was the work of Roger B. Merriman. The introduction (pp. vii-xxii), was written by William Howard Taft. These three chapters are particularly worthy of commendation. Mr. Taft really presents, in outline, the leading facts in the life of Roosevelt. "The nation has lost," he says, "the most commanding, the most original, the most interesting, and the most brilliant personality, in American public life since Lincoln."

The volume of Roosevelt's letters to his children, extending over the period 1898 to 1911, serves an excellent supplement to the more formal biographies, for it is possible through its reading to know certain characteristics of Roosevelt, the man, as through none of the other sources. It is not surprising that Colonel Roosevelt stated: "I would rather have this book published than anything that has ever been written about me" (p. 10). How much he appreciated the home relations is evident on almost every page as, in a letter to his daughter, Ethel, he wrote: "Fond

as I am of the White House and much though I have appreciated these years in it, there isn't any place in the world like home—like Sagamore Hill, where things are our own, with our own associations, and where it is real country" (p. 165). These letters discuss in a charming manner affairs of state, hunting trips, books and their authors, and public men of the period. "From the youngest to the eldest," as Mr. Bishop states, "he wrote to them always as his equals" (p. 4).

J. A. JAMES

*The correspondence of Nicholas Biddle.* Dealing with national affairs, 1807-1844. Edited by Reginald C. McGrane, Ph.D. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin company, 1919. 365 p. \$6.00)

In typography and binding this sumptuous volume bears out the best traditions of the Riverside press. Its introduction, notes, index, and scholarly apparatus are in harmony with its excellent format. As a worthy memento of an important public character, it reflects the activity of a bygone era and the just pride felt in the achievements of an honored American family. The publishers, the family representatives, and the editor have combined to produce a work worthy of the reputation and services of its title-bearer.

The name of Nicholas Biddle once stood high in national councils, although as president of the second United States bank it was linked with an unpopular institution. With Hamilton and Gallatin, Biddle forms the great financial triumvirate of our first half-century of national history. Like his two great compeers, he favored centralized control in national finance, and the immediate success that attended their system was its best justification. Unfortunately, under our government fiscal affairs cannot be separated from politics and Biddle, like Hamilton and Gallatin, was in a measure sacrificed to partisan clamor. Yet all three made their influence felt in behalf of sound finance and, despite the temporary divorce of national treasury from the ordinary business world, their principles have largely shaped our subsequent fiscal policy.

Nearly a score of years ago the late Professor Catterall made extensive use of the Biddle papers in his volume on *The second United States bank*, to which the present work will serve as useful check. This fact alone would justify Mr. McGrane's task, but Biddle was more than a mere financial magnate and it is fitting to recognize, as in the present work, his many-sided activities. He graduated from Princeton as class leader in 1801, at the early age of fifteen. Three years later he became secretary of the American legation at Paris, where he had a chance to connect his name with the closing transactions of the Louisiana purchase. Returning from Paris in 1807, the year he attained his majority, he en-